

**COMMUNITY DIALOG  
ON  
TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE**

**Meeting Summary of January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2003**

The first meeting of the Community Dialog on Transportation and Land Use ("Community Dialog") was held at Braddock Hall, adjacent to the Braddock District Supervisor's office, on Wednesday, January 22<sup>nd</sup>. Supervisor Bulova welcomed the group and invited attendees to introduce themselves.

Supervisor Bulova referred Dialog participants to a blue folder containing materials for the Dialog Series. She asked participants to fill out the index card provided in the folder and explained that this information would be used to create a Community Dialog Mailing List. **Dialog participants will be sent Meeting Summaries and Agendas for the next meetings via e-mail** (for those having e-mail accounts). If participants do not use e-mail, this information will be sent by fax or postal service.

Participants were requested to list on the back of the card reasons for supporting, or not supporting, the recently defeated referendum on an increase in the sales tax to pay for transportation improvements in the region. Comments written on the cards can be viewed following the end of this meeting summary.

After a short break, participants were invited to share with the group their reasons for voting "yes" or "no" on the Sales Tax Referendum. Supervisor Bulova began by reading a very thoughtful letter she had received from a long-time constituent who had voted against the referendum, and who had respectfully declined participation in the Dialog Series. The constituent expressed concern about growth, and about enormous transportation projects that made her travel (she is 73 years old) confusing and unpleasant. Even these large projects, she wrote, didn't seem to alleviate congestion. The constituent concluded, *"I cannot tell you just why the increase of half a cent in the sales tax was defeated, but it came at a very tough time for me and most likely for many others. Our bank interest is way down, dividends way down, a threat of war... the fact that a long- ago 'temporary' food tax remained on and on and on, all the big business ventures that shut down so many jobs... airlines going bankrupt... gasoline prices going up, medical visits soaring, plus another layer of government employees manning the revenue that might be expected if Fairfax did get to keep the sales tax money generated."* Supervisor Bulova said she thought the letter was a very frank summary of many of the reasons for the referendum's defeat.

A number of Dialog Participants expressed their views as follows:

- Dennis Chamot: *Voted no to send a message. People are disgusted in general with the current situation. Roads won't make things better when the growth just keeps coming.*

- Russell Klosk: *Was initially against the proposal, but voted yes. We need the money. He was reassured that the funding would be directed here in Northern Virginia once he read the law.*
- Bob Kelly: *Voted no because he thought the proposal was an inequitable split in funding, and the first step in another tax increase for more funding for schools. Because of so much money going to the schools, we are experiencing problems in other areas.*
- Jim Williams: *Was ambivalent about the referendum. Felt he wasn't fully informed enough to vote for it. Doesn't trust VDOT to spend money wisely. They seem always to go over budget and to not get things done on time*
- Jim Buratti: *Voted against the referendum because VDOT has open-ended projects like the Woodrow Wilson Bridge and Springfield Interchange projects, which just keep expanding. There is no accountability. We should be moving people, not cars. In 1986 the sales tax was raised 1/2 cents and the money isn't being spent on roads. The Governor is taking money for transportation to balance the budget.*
- Nell Hurley: *Voted no because of VDOT's lack of accountability. Last summer the Fairfax County Water Authority began a project to extend water lines on Olley Lane. It should have been finished by the end of the summer and they are still working on it. What's wrong?*
- Bob Griendling: *Voted no because the projects would have led to more sprawl. We in the older parts of the County are left behind when new development creates the need for spending money to build new schools. New development doesn't pay for itself.*
- Paul Kite: *Voted yes, but doesn't know if he would do it again. VDOT wastes money. We should demand better accountability of VDOT.*
- Mike Malak: *Voted no because gasoline taxes are a better way to fund transportation. Virginia has the 14<sup>th</sup> lowest gasoline tax in the country. Does not trust VDOT, they build pedestrian-hostile roads. Unhappy about increases in the real estate tax.*

A brief discussion took place about Fairfax County being a "Dillon Rule" state. Supervisor Bulova explained that this means localities are assumed to have no authority to adopt new laws or adopt or raise taxes other than "county" taxes (i.e. the real estate tax) unless it is expressly given to them by the state. She said that for years the County had tried to get authority for an "Adequate Public Facilities" ordinance. This would permit countries to restrict growth to areas of the county where adequate roads and schools and other services are in place to support the new development. According to Linda Waller of Supervisor Kauffman's office, the most recent Adequate Public Facilities bill had died in a House Committee in the General Assembly this afternoon.

- Chris Craig: *Voted no because the referendum was not the right mechanism for raising funding for transportation. The Northern Virginia Transportation Authority was a flawed mechanism because any one of the localities that were members could veto a project from coming into its jurisdiction. Projects such as widening I-66 inside the beltway would be overturned by Arlington.*

- Dan Desko: *His household was very split. In the end he voted yes because he thought this was the only near term solution to getting anything done. Unhappy with state leadership and accountability.*
- Gwen Cody: *Virginia is a different state. Compared to other states, our taxes are low. So much is available here. Federal government employees and their children flock to Fairfax County for great schools and services for children with disabilities. 64 nationalities in our schools. Great programs but costly.*
- Jeff Nolan: *Lives in Bonnie Brae. He voted yes, but most people in Bonnie Brae voted no. He said that Bonnie Brae residents were concerned that VDOT wastes money and that Fairfax County does not get its rightful share of state transportation money.*
- Barbara Williams: *Behavior contributes to our traffic congestion. Need better driving education and programs. Widening the roads won't help.*
- Student (didn't give name): *We should focus more on the Metro system. Need better mass transportation. Everybody here gets in their cars to go to work.*
- Jim Buratti: *Move people not cars. Land use is an important link to transportation. Why did county turn down development at the Dunn Loring Metro station and approve development in Tyson's, where there is almost no mass transit?*
- Ivan Diedrich: *Voted against the referendum because it would encourage growth further to our west. Traffic from the new development would further congest Fairfax roads.*
- Mark Werfel: *We are a wealthy county and could afford to raise more money, but there is mistrust that the funding would not be used here to address our traffic problems. The Dialog will get to, if not the right answers, at least the right questions.*

Supervisor Bulova again referred Dialog Participants to the contents of the blue folder. She reviewed the programs for each night of the series, and said that there was room to add something that the group might like to explore in addition to the printed syllabus.

The group turned to the printed "*Rules for Participation and Voting*" (See below). After a brief discussion, Gwenn Cody moved to adopt the Rules as presented. Nancy Baltrusch seconded the motion. The *Rules for Participation and Voting* were unanimously adopted.

Supervisor Bulova asked the group to consider the draft *Mission Statement* (See below). Mark Werfel moved to approve adoption of the Mission Statement. The motion was seconded by Gwen Cody. Following discussion, a motion was approved to amend the Mission Statement by changing the last paragraph. That motion, made by Bob Griendling, seconded by Nell Hurley passed by a show of hands. The amendment changed the last sentence from "*Participants in the Dialog will explore and recommend strategies for addressing the traffic congestion that plagues the Northern Virginia region.*" To: "*Participants in the Dialog will explore and recommend strategies for addressing the transportation and land use issues in the Northern Virginia region.*"

The group discussed the need for advocacy once recommendations/strategies were adopted. Supervisor Bulova agreed that advocacy would be discussed throughout the program and that the group would be provided with information on how to proceed once the Community Dialog had completed its work.

The meeting adjourned at 9:02 p.m. **The next meeting of the Community Dialog on Transportation and Land Use is scheduled for 7 PM on Wednesday, February 5<sup>th</sup>. See agenda below.**

Supervisor Sharon Bulova

**Attendees:**

Supervisor Sharon Bulova

Braddock District Staff:

Florence Naeve

Colin Campbell

Joanne Swick

Sally Tomlin

Ronni McCrohan

Nancy Baltrusch

George Barker

Marilyn Blois

Jim Burratti

Dennis Chamot

Gwen Cody

Bernice Colvard

Chris Craig

Dottie Dane

Dan Desko

Ivan Dietrich

Mervin Dizenfeld

Cie Garder

Bob Griendling

Suzanne Harsel

Reid Herlihy

Nell Hurley

Robert Kelly

Paul Kite

Russell Klosk

Frank Kovach

Michael Malak

Lisa Martin

Phyllis McDevitt

Walt Mika

Frank Mustac

Jeffrey Nolan

Rev. Ron Qualley

Tom Reinkober

Judy Rexrode

Mike Salmon

Karl Schwartz

Winnie Shapiro

Peter Skoro

Harry Stevenson

Jeff Stoll

Timothy Lee Unrine

Terry Wanbaugh

Mark Werfel

Jim Williams

Barbara Williams